1: Lévi-Strauss--105 E-6 (1938-1949)1948 SP17 Nambikuara SP17

622 The command carries, moreover, a certain number of fixed offices. It is the chief who makes the poison for arrows; and he presides over ceremonies of initiation, of marriage or burial, concerning which we shall speak later. He organizes chants and dances, festivals both when they assume a ritual character, and when they have as a goal purely secular distraction. It is he who organizes 622 ball games. The ball game is widespread in western and northern 526 Mato Grosso, for it is found from the Paresi to the tribes of the Lower Guaporé. Among the latter people we have been able to gather evidences of its sociological significance. It is perhaps the same among the Nambikwara; but, at least during the period of nomadic life, the ball game is practiced with a purely recreational goal in mind. The teams are built up haphazardly from those present and upon the spur of the moment, and the game takes place in a spirit of complete improvisation.

## WAR AND TRADE

648 The two subjects should be treated simultaneously, commercial 609 exchanges usually representing potential wars peacefully re-[91] 439 solved, and the wars, the outcome of unhappy transactions. Among the numerous bands which cross through the bush during the dry season, it is necessary to distinguish those who are related by family ties, and who often represent the population of a winter village—or of a group of villages—which has "burst forth" in the pursuit of the nomadic life. Among themselves these bands entertain relationships which are normally pacific, although not necessarily so. On the contrary, bands which are strangers to one another, composed of members not related among themselves and whose geographic location is far distant, or who are even separated by differences of language, mistrust one another at the same time that they feel themselves necessary to one another. Only when they meet can they procure desirable articles which only one of them is capable of obtaining or of making. These articles seemed to us to belong essentially to three categories: first of all women, whom only victorious expeditions are permitted to carry off. Next seeds, notably bean seeds, and finally ceramics, or [283] even fragments of pottery used to make the weights of spindles. Group [94] al whose cultural level is clearly inferior (especially in its ignorance concerning pottery) to that of its western and southern neighbors, according to the word of its chief, had carried on several campaigns during the last few years with the goal of procuring these two last articles.

37. tamaĩ'a ãtne munãtjere munãtjenãtitore njanã' (bl)
The Tamandé sing well; as for me, I cannot sing well any more!

In one case which we witnessed, the general tone was quickly raised with the excitement of the meeting, and the night had not yet ended before the speeches mixed with chants made an extraordinary uproar, whose significance escaped us completely. Menacing gestures were outlined, sometimes even some scuffles were produced while other Indians intervened as mediators. All of these hostile manifestations are stylized, and end as gestures calling to mind sexual parts of the body. On the part of the aggressor, menace, or the gesture of Nambikwara hostility, consists of seizing the penis with two hands and directing it towards the adversary while inflating the stomach and thrusting it out, and of flexing the knees ( the men also make this gesture in fun toward children when they wish to get rid of them). The second stage consists of an act of aggression toward the person [291] of the adversary, with a view to tearing off the piece of buriti straw attached to the front of the waist, above the sex organs. The latter "are hidden by the straw" and "they fight to tear away the straw." This action is entirely symbolic, for the covering of the male sex organs is made of such fragile material and is reduced so small in size (and often non-existent) that it is out of the question for it to assure protection of or be any kind of covering for the organs. Another form of aggression consists of seizing the adversary's bow and arrows and laying them aside. In all of these actions the attitude of the Indians is extremely tense as if they were (and really, they are) in a state of violent and contained anger. Doubtless these brawls degenerate at times into generalized conflicts, but in our case, they calmed down at dawn. Always [ 93] in the same state of apparent irritation, and with gestures devoid of friendship, the adversaries looked at one another to inspect one another, rapidly [301] feeling the earrings, the cotton bracelets, the little feather ornaments, while murmuring rapid words:

38. tõhẽ' tõhẽ' kãhẽ' kãhẽ' mutinĩ'ti (bl)
Give, give, see, see, it is pretty!

This "inspection of reconciliation" marks the normal conclusion of the conflict. And actually it is this which introduces the new aspect which the relationships between the two groups are going to take—commercial exchanges. However summary the material culture of the Nambikwara may be, the products of the industry of the different groups are highly prized by their neighbors. The eastern groups need pottery and seeds; the northern and central groups consider

that their southern neighbors make particularly nice necklaces. Also the meeting of the two groups, when it can take place in a peaceful manner, has as a consequence a series of reciprocal presents. The always impending conflict gives way to a market. This has some very remarkable characteristics in the sense that if one regards the presents only as presents, they do not bring any thanks nor proof of satisfaction. And if one considers them exchanges, they are effected without any bargaining, attempts to set the value of the article, depreciation, or manifestation of disagreement between the parties. Truthfully, they take pains not to admit that there are exchanges going on. Each goes about his usual occupations, and the objects or products go from one to the other, without the one who gives making note of the gesture by which he hands over his present, and without the one who receives paying any attention to his new wealth. In this way are exchanged husked cotton and balls of thread; blocks of wax or resin; urucu paste; shells, earrings, bracelets and necklaces; tobacco and seeds; feathers and sticks of bamboo destined for making arrow points; skeins of palm fibers, porcupine quills; whole pots or broken pottery; gourds. This mysterious circulation of merchandise goes on without haste for a half day or a whole day, after which the groups separate, and each one takes inventory of what he has received, and remembers what he has given. Thus, as regards the equity of the transactions, the Nambikwara trust entirely, the generosity of the partner. The idea that one might estimate, discuss or bargain, demand or take back is entirely foreign to them. We had promised an Indian a hunting sword as the price of transporting a message to a neighboring group. The commission was done, but upon the return of the messenger we had neglected, occupied by other cares, to give him immediately the agreed upon recompense, thinking that he himself would come to get it. He did nothing, and the next day we could not find him. He had left, very irritated his companions told us, and we did not [94] see him again. We were forced to entrust the present to another Indian. Under these conditions, it is not surprising that when the exchanges are finished, one of the groups departs discontented with its lot and, while taking inventory of its acquisitions and recalling its own presents, accumulates bitterness for weeks or months, which become greater and greater and more aggressive. It seems that wars very often have no other origin. Naturally other causes exist, such as a murder or carrying off women, depending on whether one desires to take the initiative, or whether one wishes to avenge a preceding attack; but it does not seem that a band feels

63. tenũkẽ tenũkẽ utawtiri (bl). 157
To me! To me! Throw! 521

However the artisan at work also makes his wife, child, neighbor participate in the execution of the work on whose vicissitudes he comments gaily:

64. tiõ tanĩ tiõ... ẽmi... kãtaha... munẽlina... kãtiaene... nocua... talumẽ... nãhin... iahena... mãhiana. (bl)
Hold it [the cord] so that I can twist it... let it go! It fell!... There!... It is difficult!... It is done!... Does it suit you?.. It is ugly!... No, it is pretty!

The last formula is ritual, it is the one they use at the end of [88]
chants and dances; the protagonists excuse themselves: "it is ugly"; and the audience responds: "No, it is pretty!"

[123] This politeness is not always without malice, and compliments 157
sometimes hide attempts at mockery. We cited above the formula used by 521
a group to depreciate their dances in comparison to those of their companions 576
they have just met; (1) but a few hours earlier, disdaining a present of beads

1. Cf. p. 92.

which I offered and which were not much appreciated because of their color, they advised me:

65. uõtin maimãdé tumãhãde (bl)
Keep them to give to the Maimandé.

One day we were sold poison tubes (by group a2) described as so 439
dangerous that we should abstain from ever opening them under pain of im- 799
mediate death. They proved to be empty, which testifies to great 157
ingenuity if the mystery was improvised on our account. In any case, it throws a curious light on the relationships between neighboring groups.

412 415 in her burden basket, whereas the modern axe, knives, and other tools, along with his ornaments, the man carries in a similar basket, or he straps this basket on the back of a boy while he walks in front of the file carrying his bow and arrows or gun ready to shoot whatever game is met along [264] the way. Whenever they kill some animal or catch a few fish and feel hungry they stop and prepare a meal. During the dry season they are at home anywhere in their band territory, moving only when hunger spurs them on.

411 412 177 Today, of course, the Nambicuara have steel axes and knives. The heavy equipment of the Wakitisu band in 1948, consisted of three axes, two shotguns, and some half dozen hoes which were hidden near their permanent house. Each man had a butcher knife, but all men did not have bows and arrows. There did not appear to be any desire on the part of each man to possess these implements. So long as the band had a few of these objects everyone seemed to be satisfied. Chacrudo, a widower when he arrived in Utiarity, did not possess a bow and arrow, nor a gun, nor an ax. By working for the Protestant missionaries he acquired an ax and when Marciano died he inherited his bow and arrows. After a • [439] few days, however, he had given the bow and arrows to a Brazilian in exchange for a felt hat.

412 Examining the hand tools which Julio used, the following articles were found: A chisel (*kwotiru*) made by inserting a piece of steel into a wooden handle wound with twine; a small bamboo [306] knife (*alkikwirikutu*); a hardwood drill (*Mokutu*), used with sand for perforating tucum nut shells in making beads; a piece of sandstone (*dälipiru*), used as a whetstone; a number of rough leaves of the lixeiro tree (*kle'dnutu*), used as sandpaper; and a 415 comb (*ka'dlutu*). Each of Julio's three wives had a burden basket, a small square basket, and two or three gourd vessels of various sizes. A single wooden mortar and pestle did service for the whole band.

411 One of the most important implements of the Nambicuara is the bow, *kälkiu*, made from the piuva (jacaranda-copaia) or the siriva palm (*Syagrus speciosa*). By far the most common is the bow made from piuva, ranging between 6 and 7 feet in length, flat on the inside and convex on the outside. One of the bows examined measured 2 meters and 14 cm. in length, 4 cm. in width, and 1.5 cm. in